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Met Office statement on the UK Carbon Transition Plan

15 July 2009

Julia Slingo, Met Office Chief Scientist, comments on the UK Carbon Transition Plan published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change.

"I welcome the basis of the Government's Carbon Transition Plan White Paper that has been published today.

"The evidence is clear that emissions of man-made greenhouse gases are causing climate change. The rate of change began as significant, has become alarming and is simply unsustainable in the long term. It is, therefore, in our best interests to move to a low-carbon economy.

"Research from the Met Office has already shown that only urgent and deep reductions in our emissions will allow us to keep global temperature rises below 2 °C.

"Even if emissions start to decrease in the next two years and reach a rapid and sustained rate of decline of 3% per year, temperatures are likely to rise to 1.7 °C above pre-industrial levels by 2050 and to 2 °C by 2100. This is because carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere will be around for many years to come and the climate takes some time to respond. Our research also shows that for every 10 years we delay action another 0.5 °C will be added to the most likely temperature rise.

"Impartial and peer-reviewed science undertaken by the Met Office and others enables our government to develop sound policies to put the UK on a firm footing to lead international negotiations on taking action to tackle climate change.

"What is very clear is that some increase in temperature is inevitable in the next century, but by tackling our emissions today, through expanding renewable energy and developing low-carbon industries and transport we can have a real impact on the climate during this century and next."

The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan

Notes

- The Met Office Hadley Centre is the UK's foremost centre for climate change research. Mainly funded by DECC (the Department of Energy and Climate Change), Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and the Ministry of Defence, it provides information and advice to the UK Government on climate change issues.